THE PLAIN VIEW

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WINTER 1950

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Incentives and Ideals in an Industrial Society — R. P. LYNTON
The Problem of Humanist Action — J. B. COATES
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THE PLAIN VIEW

Edited by H. J. BLACKHAM

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Ὦ ὀλίγον οὐχ ἱκανόν, ἀλλὰ τούτῳ γε οὐδὲν ἱκανόν. —EPICURUS

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the productiveness and the resources of human quality

THIS IS THAT WHICH WILL INDEED DIGNIFY AND EXALT KNOWLEDGE, IF CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION MAY BE MORE NEARLY AND STRAITLY CONJOINED AND UNITED TOGETHER THAN THEY HAVE BEEN; A CONJUNCTION LIKE UNTO THAT OF THE TWO HIGHEST PLANETS, SATURN THE PLANET OF REST AND CONTEMPLATION, AND JUPITER, THE PLANET OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACTION. —BACON

What the plain view perceives is neither obvious nor obscure

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COMMENTARY

DILEMMA. The decision of the West to rearm, which has distressed and worried many people, is, if one considers it as a moral issue, a striking example of the complexity of every real moral question and the futility of debating it as a case of conscience. The question is not whether one can with all scrupulousness conscientiously support rearmament or ought rather to protest; it is not a question of the rightness of the decision or the rightness of the motive; a readiness to do the right thing though the heavens fall is no earthly help (and never is in any serious moral issue): it is a question of what led to the new initiative and of what it will lead to, and of how to minimize the risks and evils which attend its carrying out. Any serious moral question is bound up with some long-term, total, positive policy; only the frivolous dilettante makes a case of conscience on principle and weighs motives and debates right and wrong, and his scruples do not mean a thing nor matter a split hair.

In this case, there are two opposed easy views which more or less settle the matter for (perhaps) most people. Those with a bias to the political Right say that we have with great forbearance tried to play fair with the Russians since the war, have loyally carried out the agreements made with them and have stood by whilst they took a free hand in Eastern Europe; now that they have over and over again showed themselves in their true colours, it is impossible to mistake their ultimate intention, and with the disastrous example of appeasement behind us and flagrant acts of aggression before us it is high time to call a halt. Those whose bias is to the Left are moved by their early and underlying sympathy with the ideal content of communist policy and by a present and active mistrust of American business and American politics, aggravated to the point of sick fear by the wave of anti-communist hysteria, the possession of the atom bomb, and the fanatical modern assumption that appeasement is treason and the only terms for the enemy unconditional surrender; they feel that it would be better to be occupied by the Russians than to bring on a third world war, and therefore that it is worth taking the risk, since in all previous cases an arms race has precipitated war; if they submit to rearmament it is with misgivings and as victims of a policy which is influenced by world forces and factors they dislike and fear.

Both these views are plausible because both are rooted in facts and nourished by understandable moderate sentiments. Nevertheless, both are unrealistic and blind, in that neither amounts to a policy equal to the situation or is much more than strong feeling.

America emerged from the war as the strongest power in the world, in industrial potential and in strategic positions. Whatever her political intentions as a nation, she represented European civilization, and European civilization, borne forward by the momentum of its history, in its every tendency claimed the future. One of the most distinguished and respected European philosophers, Edmund Husserl, wrote in 1936 in an article which was regarded as important, the following formulation of the issue. "It is thanks to philosophy that it will be able to be decided whether European humanity is the bearer of an absolute idea, or is simply an anthropological type like 'China' or 'India,' and, moreover, whether the Europeanization of all foreign peoples is evidence in favour of the power of the absolute meaning of the European idea bound up with the meaning of the world or is an unmeaning accident of its history." Unfortunately this is not a question which is left to philosophy to decide. The peaceful penetration of all cultures by western ideas, ideals, and idioms, with western techniques, is the outcome of industrial expansion. Russia, with her faith that Marxist humanity is alone the bearer of an absolute idea, and with the remembered vision of 1931 as a foretaste of the triumph ahead, could not but feel the world-wide peaceful expansion of the American idea as a menace. The mere existence of America was a menace (a real menace, not a phobia) since she was so much more powerful and there was the influence over the development of the tremendous Asian masses to contend for. It did not need the loose talk of preventive war in diplomatic circles as early as 1945, nor recollection of the defeat early in the century at the hands of the Asian protégé of Washington and London, to make the Russians build up their power and influence as feverishly as their severely mauled condition allowed. If Russia seems to be following the tragic role of Germany, that is because she is virtually in the same position, with perhaps additional incentives. We think of ourselves as going about our lawful occasions and injuring nobody, but that is conduct which very often looks quite different from outside.

There would be little or no hope if it lay wholly and solely between Russia and America. Marxist thought assumes that it must be they or us in the class struggle which in the present phase of history rives the world; and American policy, at first content to contain Russian expansion, is moving up to contest communism on all fronts. To take sides or refuse to take sides is no use. The only hope is in the United Nations Organization. It is not the old idealistic hope that the theory will work and the nations will behave

according to the unexceptionable ideas of a speaker from UNA. It is the more modest hope that mixed interests and independent views will save the world from an irrevocable split into two camps. On the assumption that all are bound by the dread of world war and none can hope to profit by one, if the great majority are united in action against aggression and if many or most of the Powers habitually make an independent approach to other questions, the limits of what is feasible in politics will become settled and clear and the shadow of a life and death struggle will pass off.

Therefore, those who are not communists are bound to side with America in preparing to resist any possible act of aggression inspired by Russia. Consistently, if their idea is to prevent war, are they not bound to side with Russia in trying to stop the spread of American influence? The question shows how hypocritical it would be to pretend that it is not a struggle *à outrance* between them and us if the world allows itself to be divided between the two camps of opposed ideologies with a vast disputed sphere of influence to contend for. Everything depends upon Britain and India, amongst others, playing an independent role and encouraging communist China to do so. The foreign policy of the present State Department may be restrained, liberal, and enlightened, honestly devoted, as it explicitly claims, to partnership in the United Nations for promoting and safeguarding the independence of the Asian peoples. But the present policy may be swept away by popular feeling or political change. And in any case, the independence of Asian peoples is an equivocal principle, a brittle foundation of policy. Does it mean ousting (all in good time) the present regime from China, for example? The deafening truth is, nonetheless, that genuine national independence is the only hope the world has of avoiding catastrophic general war. If a majority of the United Nations cannot act effectively not only against any aggression but also against the maintenance of any puppet regime by the arms of any foreign power, both sides will drive on to war. The principle is always clear, the application nearly always dubious. It is the nations other than Russia and America who will make, or fail to make, the international community; in their hands lies the fate of the world. They need to be strong; even more, they need to be vigilantly open-eyed and vigorously outspoken. It is not by adopting right principles that one becomes moral, nor even by applying them, unless one also fights ceaselessly against the evil consequences of applying them.

THE TYPE. Victorian hero-worship, whether the rite was celebrated by an organ *bravura* of Carlyle or Emerson's *coloratura* or with the dull decorum of a Life and Letters or in a success story of Samuel Smiles, was a religion that had not heard of the Fall of Man. The great man was a Representative Man, as the noble word is a part of speech. His performance was the thing, as poet or mystic or man of action. He showed us just how the instrument could be played, and left us panting with emulation. All this is far more rousing than a love story, to the adolescent ready to give his heart to a chosen vocation: he will be an actor, a journalist, or nothing; no toil is too arduous or too humiliating that will qualify him for the part; the smell of print or of grease paint makes his hair rise and his skin sweat; the pomp and circumstance, the traditions and glories, cloud his reason and blot out the world. He is indistinguishable from the lover *tout court.*

All romantic glory has its prosaic sentimental reflection. One will be an artist and half kills himself with work. Another would be an artist, and cultivates his beard. It is the sentimental public that falls for its cherished type, the beard, the loose clothes, the flowing tie, the bohemian manners. The type is perfected in the comic illustrated papers. Not that they are altogether pure inventions. It is well known how Max Beerbohm studied and reverenced his victims. But that surpassing art towers over the byronic poet or the young sporting gent as the characters of Shakespeare over the stock figures of popular drama.

The type is always an oddity, an eccentric; and that, of course, is a paradox. The reason (apart from the fact that we are all of us all too odd for any fiction) is that it is not a man but a role that is represented, whether in the absent-minded professor or in the Carlylian man of letters; and the role is marginal, aside from the man. What is a representative man (without the Victorian capitals)? Perhaps one's mind's eye wanders over the sculptured figures on a town hall: one is sure to have seen it somewhere. But the question is unanswerable, like Croce's, Is the human body beautiful? You have to say what you mean: male or female, what colour and nation, what age; finally, in what action? There is no human body, and no representative man. That leaves us with glorious vocations and funny ideas.

THE ASSUMPTIONS OF HUMANISM

by Hector Hawton

THERE is a humanist tradition in philosophy, but there is no single authoritative philosophy of humanism; nor, I think, is it either desirable or possible to crystallize a formal philosophical system out of the humanist tradition. What we can do, however, is to analyse the characteristics of this tradition and consider the assumptions on which it rests. We shall then see the broad framework in which any philosophy must be enclosed if it is to be classified as humanist rather than Christian, for example, or Marxist. Inevitably there are overlapping ideas, but unless humanism is treated as a blanket-term, its central assumptions and main objectives must be very different from those of its great rivals. What, then, is the centre or nucleus of humanism?

The word implies that the centre is faith in Man, and that at once separates us from those whose centre is trust in God. Maritain distinguishes anthropocentric from theocentric humanism; but this may lead to confusion. Historically, the main stream of humanist thought has been anthropocentric. It certainly cannot be identified with Christianity; still less plausible is Maritain's view that it finds its fulfilment in Catholicism. But there is something in Maritain's distinction between atheism and "absolute atheism." It amounts to saying that many who verbally deny the existence of God are driven willy nilly to employ elements of that concept under another name.

To put Man at the centre of our philosophy is merely to point to the focus of our concern and the limits of our knowledge. It means that our chief concern is with human happiness, here and now; and that the only knowledge we claim to possess is man-made. There may be gods; but, as Epicurus taught long ago, they do not interfere. No supernatural revelation exists; and there are no oracles to which we can turn for help when reason falters.

No one would hesitate to set Epicurus within the humanist tradition; or, for that matter, Spinoza, Rousseau, Voltaire, Goethe. They were not atheists, and it cannot be maintained that the logic of their position should have compelled them to be atheists. They had a very different idea of "God", however, from Augustine, Luther, Calvin. It is not "the God of the philosophers" who is incompatible with humanism, but "the God of Isaac and Jacob." The emphasis by contemporary theologians on the transcendental rather than the immanent character of God runs counter to the whole spirit of humanism. It is, of course, part of the widespread revolt against liberalism and reason. For if God is "the absolutely Other,"

the gulf between God and Man is unbridgeable. God cannot be approached by reason or known by analogy. This transcendental God, creating the universe *ex nihilo* by an arbitrary fiat, must of necessity draw man's interest away from the earth and fix his centre outside the cosmos. Anthropocentric humanism rejects this conception. For the humanist, whatever elements are retained of the complex and contradictory religious concept must be *within* the cosmos.

* * * *

It is common ground for humanists that such knowledge as we possess is a product of reason. During the past three centuries that knowledge has developed with amazing rapidity owing to the perfection of a special method—the imaginative use of hypothesis combined with inference, deduction and experiment. Taken by itself, of course, such knowledge is two-edged; but humanism, by placing the welfare and happiness of man at the centre of its aims, implies the will to use the tremendous power now within reach for improving the human situation. We therefore find ourselves in the strongest opposition to those who deny the very possibility of progress and by decrying science paralyse the nerve to use it creatively at this supreme crisis in history. To the undernourished, disease-ridden millions in a world threatened by still more terrible overpopulation and the spectre of famine on an unparalleled scale, the humanist gospel is the good news that for the first time in recorded history such evils can be largely eliminated. Not, as in the past, by illusory appeasement of angry gods, but by the new and powerful instrument that has resulted from the use of reason. We now actually possess sufficient knowledge of natural laws to save mankind from the daily miseries and deaths that are as tragic as the catastrophic descent of war. The type of thinking that prevents this knowledge from being employed is not humanist, but the very opposite—the deliberate cultivation of unreason, under the cloak of spirituality, the recrudescence of very ancient superstitions, such as the doctrine that the whole world has been warped by Satan and that human nature is incurably depraved. Obviously if you think that the human situation is hopeless, you will not waste time trying to improve it. But although humanism has outgrown the too easy optimism of the last century, it is fundamentally a robust and optimistic faith. It can offer no automatic law of progress whereby man can feel certain of material salvation, but it can and does bring the dynamic conviction that salvation is at long last *possible*—and it can supply the *means* which hitherto simply did not exist.

Science itself is the offspring of humanism. We cannot escape a

moral responsibility for the right use of it. Lacking scientific knowledge, early humanists had no choice but to concentrate on devising an armour for the individual against the uncontrollable blows of fate. It is only in comparatively modern times that the relation of the individual to society could be dealt with in a realistic instead of utopian fashion. Contemporary humanism is in a direct line of descent from the Enlightenment and the Utilitarians who paved the way for the Welfare State. For my part, I regard modern humanism as essentially the ideology of democratic socialism. Looking back on the somewhat confused streams that make up the humanist tradition we can now see why no specific philosophical system or single founder can be discerned. The explanation is that humanism is the result of continuous attempts of the human mind to realize its potentialities to the full, to maintain balance as it spins like a top on the razor's edge. Sometimes it has leaned too far towards individual adjustment, at other times it has swerved towards a purely social adjustment. For a humanist it is second nature to try and avoid extremes, not because the middle course is safest but in order to give the maximum play to the many-sidedness of man.

The central concept of humanism is the Complete Man—man with all his energies engaged to the utmost so that intellect is married to imagination, and reason and feeling function without inhibiting each other. This is the fine art of living, for man is not merely a two-dimensional being; he is a person as well as a member of society; and just as society is the richer when composed of free, fully-developed persons, so "what an individual does with his own solitariness", which is Whitehead's definition of religion, gains significance by a sense of social, and even cosmic, solidarity. The Complete Man is a citizen of the Universe as well as of the world, and it is this adjustment which the great religions have sought to make by means of such concepts as God, the Order of Nature, Atman and Tao.

* * * *

"The case of most systematizers," wrote Kierkegaard, "is as when a man builds a huge castle, and himself lives by the side of it in a hovel. They do not themselves *live* in that huge, systematic building of theirs; but in a spiritual relationship, this is, and becomes a decisive objection. Spiritually understood, a man's thought must be the building in which he lives—or all is mad." For humanists, too, the touchstone is whether they can really *live* in the building that their thought constructs; and surely the first essential—and this is the most telling criticism of Kierkegaard—is that it must be made out of the materials of the real world, not of fantasy, and it must

accommodate the whole of our nature. Reason must be able to move freely in it; the triumphs of the intellect—the corpus of scientific theory—must not be thrust out of sight to make room for speculative antiques.

Modern man, accepting his intellectual heritage, can live neither in the house of Kierkegaard nor the house of Maritain. The latter would merely repair the great synthesis attempted by the massive intellect of St. Thomas, which the sceptical developments of the fourteenth century and the subsequent rise of science surely ruined beyond redemption. St. Thomas, it should be remembered, did not reject science; in the Middle Ages there was virtually no science to reject; there was only natural history. Science, as we understand it, began with Galileo's discovery that human reason was free to invent new concepts to which precise mathematical determination could be given and practical tests applied. To complain, as some of its critics now do, that science is abstract, is to miss the whole point. We might as well charge Christianity with being religious.

But although we must build a habitation in which the life of reason can be enjoyed, we must beware of an arid intellectualism. In a posthumous memoir John Maynard Keynes has vividly exposed the superficiality of the Cambridge rationalism that flourished before the first World War under the dominating influence of G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell. When D. H. Lawrence was introduced to this élite he recoiled in dismay; he said they seemed to him like black beetles. Years afterwards Keynes wrote:

> "Our comments on life and affairs were bright and amusing, but brittle—as I said of the conversation of Russell and myself with Lawrence—because there was no solid diagnosis of human nature underlying them. Bertie in particular sustained simultaneously a pair of opinions ludicrously incompatible. He held that in fact human affairs were carried on after a most irrational fashion, but that the remedy was quite simple and easy, since all we had to do was to carry them on rationally. A discussion of practical affairs on these lines was really very boring . . . If, therefore, I altogether ignore our merits—our charm, our intelligence, our unworldliness, our affection—I can see us as water-spiders, gracefully skimming, as light and reasonable as air, the surface of the stream without any contact at all with the eddies and currents underneath."

The humanist cannot live in a pre-fabricated house. As an individual he has the task of working out a design for living from the stuff of his own experience. But he accepts a general style—and it

is definitely not Gothic—dictated by certain postulates. By "postulates" I mean propositions that are neither self-evident nor capable of complete verification. Humanism is therefore a breakaway from the great systems of deductive metaphysics which, misled by the success of mathematics, promised a knowledge that is certain. It believes that the quest for certitude is a snare and a delusion, and that rich and satisfactory lives can be led on the basis of the probable and tentative, once an initial act of decision is taken. We resolve to proceed, I suggest, as though there were an external world of entities whose inter-connectedness constitutes an order which human reason can discern.

Solipsism, for example, may be impossible to refute, but it is a learned folly that no man can live by. And I can no longer believe there is a half-way house between solipsism and realism. Whether the "external world" is to be construed in terms of matter, mind, mind-stuff or events is not a question when we are considering first principles. Questions of this kind will be considered by the humanist in the light of the requirements of the best scientific theory of his day, since it is no longer possible for the gifted amateur to build a metaphysical system from an armchair and ignore such an enlargement of human experience as science. The nineteenth century gave us the theory of evolution, and the twentieth century has given us relativity and quantum physics. These revolutionary conceptions must therefore dominate whatever tentative scheme we adopt in our efforts to synthesize available knowledge. The objections brought against "systems" by such opposed schools as Logical Positivism and Existentialism are fatal to the claim of metaphysical certainty. But provisional schemes which we are willing to scrap are another story. What we cannot abandon—without giving up our whole endeavour, and either relapsing into utter scepticism or escaping into blind faith—are the postulates that Nature is rational and that its laws are capable of being understood. This is the faith of every working scientist, whether he acknowledges it or no.

These postulates imply that the universe forms a system, but they do not necessarily commit us to the view that it is composed of only one sort of stuff. The concept of a homogeneous underlying substratum—whether we label it matter or mind—has received rough treatment recently and is probably an accident of grammar rather than a necessity of science. What has definitely dropped out of the modern picture is reductive materialism—the theory that all experience can be construed in terms of the shifting positions of material particles in space and time. Those materialists who pay lip-service to science yet ignore developments that are disruptive of

their simple-minded dogmas are an embarrassment to modern humanism; we should treat them as Plato did the poets—feast them with wine, crown them with garlands, and lead them gently but firmly to the city gates.

* * *

Physics, by transposing "things" into "events," causes into functional dependence, almost compels us to think of the universe in terms of "process;" and from biology we get the further clue of *evolutionary* process. The position is enormously complicated, because although we speak of "Science" there are in fact many sciences, each with a language of its own, and the ideal of a basic scientific language is perhaps unrealizable. The belief that just as chemistry can be reduced to physics, so can physiology and even psychology, is stubbornly clung to by a staunch rearguard which fights, as it supposes, a battle against the return of superstition in the guise of entelechy and teleology. These terms, however, need have no terrors outside the Aristotelian context which we abandon by substituting "Process" for "Substance." Evolution is not mere change, not the eternal re-shuffling of the same pack of cards; it is the emergence of genuine novelty in the creative passage of nature. The notion of a Creator, outside the universe, gives place to the notion of the universe itself as a creative process with a one-way direction. The laws of one level are inadequate to describe relationships on a higher level; indeed, if we take evolution seriously, all laws may be subject to change in aeons of time, except the law of the creative advance itself, "the very pulse of the machine." Efforts to find this cosmic pulse have yielded the Law of Universal Causation, the Hegelian Dialectic, and much else. L. L. Whyte has recently advanced the claims of a Law of Decreasing Asymmetry. One thing we may be sure about: such a law would be too highly abstract to be of much practical service.

But humanism is not concerned merely with a *description* of life; it proposes a *way* of life that differs from other ideals—both the Christian and the Marxist—because of its appeal to the Complete Man. It appeals to the will in ethics, and to the imagination (or the unconscious if you prefer) in meeting the demand for an interior or spiritual life. Those who, like Plotinus, are ashamed of being in the body, are not humanists. Those who would reduce the vivid, living, sensuous world to a fortuitous concurrence of atoms or a ballet of bloodless categories, are not humanists. Goethe felt that Newtonian physics threatened to rob him of the world he knew intuitively as a poet; and although he came badly out of the scientific argument, fundamentally his insight was sound. We can only

save ourselves from this impoverishment by a doctrine of integrative levels.

Ethical choice within a rational cosmic process does not consist in defying the cosmos with T. H. Huxley, but in co-operating with the *nisus* towards a higher level. The faith of the humanist is that despite all the evil and cruelty that abound, man's nature is not intrinsically corrupt, that Rousseau spoke more truly than Luther, and that there is something within us which makes for righteousness. Evil, on this view, is the degradation of a pattern of behaviour to a more primitive level, not in itself evil. Thus a civilization that emulated the level of the termites would be evil. It is good for an ape to behave like an ape, but bad for a man to do so. Choice requires freedom, and freedom is only possible in a world of emergent novelty. A free choice is an act of creation.

We are not simply spectators of the drama of existence; we are involved in it, and we extemporise our lines as the play proceeds. We know it abstractly from the outside by reasoning, but we also know it in immediacy. We feel the very throb of the Cosmic Process because we are part of it, caught up in the general creativity. We feel it in our intuitions of beauty, in those rare moments:

While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

In this perception of harmony poet and scientist can meet. Thus, Einstein: "The individual feels the nothingness of human desires and aims, and the sublimity and marvellous order which reveal themselves both in nature and the world of thought. He looks upon individual existence as a sort of prison and wants to experience the universe as a single significant whole. . . . The religious geniuses of all ages have been distinguished by this kind of religious feeling, which knows no dogma and no God conceived in man's image." The language of poetry and mysticism become indistinguishable, because in this mode words are not used as designations but as symbols to awaken an experience that seems to be basically the same everywhere—an experience so rare and precious that it is unforgettable, and so misinterpreted that we have the paradox of Spinoza denounced, on the one hand, as an atheist, and extolled on the other, as a "god-intoxicated man." Need we quibble over whether this can properly be described as "knowledge"? At such moments we are at one with Keats's thrush:

O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
And yet the evening listens.

* * * *

I have argued that the humanist tradition can be understood as an attempt to achieve a triple adjustment: (a) self-adjustment; (b) social adjustment; (c) cosmic adjustment. If the emphasis on any of these natural functions is too heavy, there is loss of balance, and we fall short of our ideal of the Whole Man, the Complete Man. It may seem superfluous to speak of cosmic adjustment; and yet the literature of poetry and mysticism, as well as recent schools of philosophy, shows that apprehension of our involvement in a process greater than ourselves may raise us to heights of wonder and even ecstasy or plunge us into depths of despair. There is the terror of the infinite spaces that Pascal knew, and the nausea and *angst* of the modern existentialist. The strength of traditional religion was that it enabled the ordinary man to feel that what evils befel him could be endured, that Fate, the Order of Nature, the Will of God, must be accepted. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

To feel estranged from the universe can be so tormenting as to amount to a pathological condition. We can even endure to be sent as Ishmaels into the wilderness if we feel ourselves to be in harmony with the general direction of things. Christianity has met the problem by regarding man as a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, yet journeying towards a heavenly destination. Without some such belief there is too often a sense of purposelessness, an even terrifying loneliness:

I a stranger, and afraid,
In a world I never made.

The humanist does not set his gaze on a wholly transcendental God or a destination outside the universe. For him there is simply no "outside." He accepts the universe as the house in which he must live. But he is no stranger in it, no passing pilgrim; the universe is his home. Within it he finds his spiritual life and ethical purpose, because he is *part* of it; and by participating in its creativity, by straining towards ever higher levels of process, by increasing the subtlety of relationships and the range of consciousness, he finds in the spur to adventure, the vision of beauty and the experience of selfless love the ultimate peace. For the eternal flux of Becoming includes an urge to self-surpassing as the price of the most intense self-attainment. It is a matter of experience that the bubble of transient pleasure bursts at the touch, that the happiest man is one who has dedicated himself to a cause greater than easy and immediate satisfaction. In this sense, we may say that the humanist is also a dedicated man.

INCENTIVES AND IDEALS IN AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

by R. P. Lynton

THESE questions are just about as big as we care to make them. For my own part, I wish to talk merely as someone with some working experience in industry, now engaged on studying its sociological aspects and the organisational implications.

Perhaps it would help to throw some light on the questions if I described very briefly how I encountered the problems of incentives. I spent the second half of the last war working on a machine in a factory. The firm was a large one but this factory only employed some 200 people: it would be rated as fairly small. We were making a part of an important air engine and there was much publicity about the national need for it. The machines were new. The workshops were bright and light. The conditions of work were as good or better than those obtaining in the engineering industry generally. Most of us were paid by the piece and management had given a guarantee that however much we earned, they would not interfere with the possibility of earning more. There was a Joint Production Committee which met regularly. There were Personnel and Welfare Officers and a whole series of social clubs of one kind or another. In short, by all accounts the factory ought to have worked well. In fact, it worked anything but well. Absenteeism was high. One of the first things I was told when I went on the machine was how many pieces, or rather how few pieces, I was to produce. Deliberate restriction of output was normal. There was continuous friction between the different sections of the factory; for instance, between the people on the machines and the inspectors who had to examine their work. Relations between the different shifts were such that it was not unusual for the operator on one shift to interfere with the adjustments on his machine in such a manner that the person on the next shift, not knowing what it was that had been altered, would spend hours trying to put it right again. Foremen and supervisors were regarded as "the other side". The workers were unionized and regularly elected very militant shop-stewards. These officials used the Joint Production Committee meetings, merely, as they put it, "to get back at the management". Whenever there was any suggestion about changing anything, whether it was the hours of work, the layout of machines, the techniques of passing the work on from one machine to another, there was an immediate clamour out of all proportion, and often completely irrational, when compared with the contemplated change. People

were not allowed to leave and strikes were practically unknown at that time. At any other time I am sure labour turnover would have been high and there would have been some strikes.

I was intrigued by this very practical end of the problem of incentives and when I left the factory, I took up studying the matter a little more systematically. I very soon found two things which intrigued me even further. In the first place, I was much reassured that the position obtaining in the factory that I have just described did not obtain everywhere. I found instead that performance varied widely between industries in terms of output, labour turnover, absenteeism, and strikes; and further, performance seemed to vary enormously between firms in the same industry. It is difficult to compare different organizations at all accurately. But however approximate the figures, some explanation seemed to be required for such statements that in industries like building, cotton spinning, hosiery, boots and shoes, the output of technically similar sections varied by 100% or more. Now, as in the case of my factory, these differences did not make sense in terms of management techniques such as wage systems, welfare schemes, and hierarchies of joint production committees. I remember, for instance, hearing about two cotton mills situated side by side, the one fairly new with a profusion of welfare facilities and good working conditions, the other a rickety building with holes in the floor and old machines; yet invariably the older factory seemed to be recruiting the scarce women workers. Moreover, firms seemed to complain of large variations even between their own departments, even when these departments employed much of the same management techniques. In one firm, owning factories in different parts of the country for instance, one unit had good relations with the community in which it was situated and also a good performance record, while in another, operating, by all appearances, with the same techniques under the same management policy, community relations were bad and performance was bad. I found as a sideline that oddities such as these were by no means confined to Britain. Industrialized nations generally seemed to be having much the same sort of trouble. Much of the material which I shall talk about later does, in fact, come from the United States, which has devoted rather more resources than we have to the study of these problems.

The brief conclusion at this stage was that what mattered was something intangible. What seemed to be important was the way people felt about the techniques rather than the nature of the techniques; in other words it was a matter of attitudes and of relationships.

Now, attitudes come from somewhere; and this brought me to the second major point. I found that incentives had only recently become a foremost problem in industry. There was much less attention given to them before even this last war. Prior to the late nineteenth century incentives were not regarded as a problem of much significance.

There seemed, in fact, to be three main phases of the problem in the history of modern industry. In the first phase, industry was wholly preoccupied with technical matters and the new and unknown potentialities of technical advance. The benefits to be derived from these were so great that little attention was paid to the workers' side of them. The worker's task was to do what he was told, neither more nor less. Any interference with the employer's endeavours was bound to be bad. The work was not necessarily regarded as nice; but the worker was certainly going to be worse off if he did not do what he was told than if he did. All this was sustained by a philosophy which derived in part from Puritan traditions and which we now normally name *laissez faire*. In essence, the relationship between employer and worker was autocratic. The employer said what a worker was to do and the worker did it. The work itself could not be changed. The only possibility was that the employer, out of the kindness of his heart, arranged works outings, dances and other distractions which we now call paternalism.

Dickens in *The Chimes* makes Sir Joseph describe his relationship to Toby, the poor man, like this: "Your only business, my good fellow, your only business in life is with me. You need not trouble yourself to think about anything. I will think for you; I know what is good for you; I am your perpetual parent. Such is the dispensation of an all-wise Providence!" That this had its dangers was recognized; but the dangers had to be compensated for outside industry. This is what Adam Smith wrote about it:

> ". . . the man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects, too, are, perhaps, always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or in exercising his invention in finding out expedients for removing difficulties which never occur. He naturally loses, therefore, the habit of such exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become . . . . Of the great and extensive interests of his country he is altogether incapable of judging . . . . The uniformity of his stationary life naturally corrupts the courage of his mind . . . . His dexterity of his own particular trade seems, in this manner, to be acquired at the expense of his

intellectual, social and martial virtues. But in every important and civilized society this is the state into which the labouring poor, that is, the great body of the people, must necessarily fall, unless government takes some pains to prevent it".

Phase two, getting under way towards the end of the nineteenth century, is characterized by an increasing restiveness on the part of the workers under these conditions and increasing efforts on the part of employers to ameliorate the conditions but without altering the underlying relationship.

All sorts of techniques were tried to induce the worker to go on: hours were reduced, wages were increased, new systems of payment by results were evolved, and later were added welfare schemes and often personnel departments, all to sustain the same relationship. When all these did not work the employers threatened the sack to enforce it.

We should, perhaps, not be too critical of all this. The relationship grew up and is to be understood only in relation to the conditions of that time. The employers were uncertain of the new technical devices of industry and of their increasingly inflexible methods of production in a competitive world. The workers were thrown hurriedly together in unfamiliar towns and unfamiliar working environments. For a large part of the time the political scene was unsettled. Be all this as it may, the point now is that the conditions have vastly changed and that the attitudes and relationships in industry have not changed with them. Industry and large towns have become accepted as focal points of modern society. The workers enjoy a greatly increased standard of living and the increased choice that goes with it. They are far better educated than they were not so many years ago. They have their own powerful organizations. They have received the vote and become politically conscious. But inside industry the old relationship persists. Instead of changing with these conditions, relations in industry have become rigid in the old pattern. With the growth of large towns and particularly of large industrial enterprise, employers and workers are more than ever separate and live in ignorance of each other. They belong to different social strata. They do not come into contact outside industry, so that the autocratic relationship between them is the only one they know: and this is increasingly at variance with conditions outside. The gap is confirmed by what is increasingly the general attitude to industry: a necessity, perhaps, but a necessary evil. As Peter Drucker points out, we were apalled when we learned that during the war many city children saw a tree for the first time in their lives, but we seem

to have accepted the position in which the majority of people have no first-hand impression of the leading modern institution, the factory.

Let it be said at once that industry is not the only aspect of society that has, as it were, got out of gear. Society has generally lost coherence. In our towns, the house has tended to replace the home, and even neighbours hardly know each other. School teachers pursue their task in ignorance of their pupils' parents. Human contact is generally short and slight. There are multitudes of right and left hands that do not know what they are really each doing. Professor Elton Mayo summed it up like this:

> "The issue the civilized world is facing now is a rapid industrial, mechanical, physiochemical advance, so rapid that it has been destructive of all the historic social and personal relationships . . . While material efficiency has been increasing for 200 years the human capacity for working together has in the same period continuously diminished . . . The 'growth of nationalism' or 'collective bargaining' as a means of preventing industrial disputes merely serves to mask this fact . . . Some essential determinant of order in human affairs has been left out of account. We have, in a word, moved out of the established society of our forefathers into the fast-moving adaptive society of the present without the capacity—yet—to adapt".

Back in industry the strangest things happen as a result of the division and misconceptions which one side of industry has of the other. Almost invariably the workers seem to want quite different things from what their own employers think they want. In one large survey of attitudes to work, for instance, the employees rated credit for work done first while their employers placed it seventh. Interesting work was second in the employees' list and fair pay was third, whereas the employers put fair pay at the head of the list. In America recently, a telephone company decided on its own to double the monthly pensions it gave to its workers. The Union, instead of welcoming the concession without negotiations of one of its main claims, proposed instead to bring charges of unfair practice against the company for having increased pensions without consultation and bargaining with the Trade Union. We could give many more examples, for instance from the field known as industrial welfare. They all point to the fact that, in the words of Professor Mayo, "in every instance of which we have first-hand knowledge, there is clear evidence that the usual ideas and practice in industry are based on a general misconception of the nature of the problem and consequently on a misconception also of the nature of effective

remedy". How this sort of successive misapprehension leads into vicious circles can easily be seen: it may be a simple progression action, followed by anger and resentment, and by recruiting people into managerial positions who are prepared to fit into that sort of situation.

This then is the third phase: it is characterized by bewilderment and wonder and resentment. Where do we go from here? It is perhaps worth observing in passing that the growth of social science has taken place during this third phase. We cannot do more than use very briefly the elementary points around which an increasing amount of knowledge has been built up. There is, firstly, the stress on man as a social being. The literature on the importance of the small working group in the factory is expanding rapidly: study after study confirms that the dominant attitudes of the worker are evolved in association with his immediate work companions. This is so important that pride in the working group is the only factor that is directly and significantly related to output. The second focus point is on man as a whole man: the industrial side is only one part of him, and cannot be separated out from the rest. It is not possible to treat him as a responsible person in the family, in the trade union, in the club, in politics, and as a person to do without questioning what he is told in industry, without producing internal conflict. And, thirdly, the social background into which industry needs to fit differs in important respects from place to place. The differences may not be as great as those found by anthropologists between South Sea island cultures and Western industrial society, where the normal healthy person of one would not merely be ill-adjusted in the other but be pathologically maladjusted. The differences within an industrialized country like Britain are slighter but still important: differences in the make-up of family and social life, in religious background, in political awareness, in the importance attached to industry, in the standing of one industry as compared with another. Thus the management policies and techniques which are suitable in one place may be quite unsuitable in another.

To the extent that we live in the same society and that the general social changes have affected similarly the various communities there are some broad similarities of great relevance to industry. There is general agreement, for instance, that industrial workers co-operate better with management if they participate in decisions that affect them. I propose to devote the rest of what I have to say to examining this a little closer, both as to the kind of research data on which the emphasis on participation is based, and the implications in industry. It will not surprise us at this stage that this wish for par-

ticipation differs in degree and in the way in which it is expressed as between different communities and that it exists outside as well as inside industry.

First some illustrations. They come from America, from a group of research workers who associated with Professor Lewin at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and now are members of the Survey Research Centre at the University of Michigan. You may know of Professor Lewin's experiments in America during the war with the changing of food habits in families. He found that the housewife's decision on such matters was easily the most important, and his experiments were conducted with them. The objective of one was to increase the use of beef hearts, sweetbreads, and kidneys; he commented that if one considered the psychological forces which kept these housewives from using these intestinals, one was tempted to think of some deep-seated aversions requiring something like psycho-analytical treatment. He had six experimental groups: three were given very attractive lectures which linked the problem of the required changes with the war effort, emphasized the vitamin and mineral content of these foods, and gave detailed explanations with the aid of charts and discussions on their proper preparation for the table. The other three groups proceeded mainly by way of discussion and group decision. Factually the information supplied to the two sets of groups was the same. But whereas only three per cent. of the women who heard the lectures served one of the foods they had never served before, 32 per cent. did so after the group decision. The same experience was gained in connection with other foods. It was found also that trying to influence an individual housewife even by individual discussion was in no way as effective as reaching a group decision. Another experiment related to four boys' clubs of 11-year-old children. Briefly, they were subjected to an authoritarian leadership, to a democratic leadership and to a *laissez faire* leadership, that is one in which the leader took a minimum of action. Under both the benevolent authoritarian leadership and the *laissez faire* leadership, the boys were not as happy, measured by a number of standards, as they were under democratic leadership, that is where they had what they considered real leadership combined with a great deal of participation.

In industry, a particularly interesting investigation was carried out recently in a large company which had invested both time and money in all sorts of employee services, such as Music While You Work—the Americans call it industrial music—health, canteen, and recreation facilities. Its management was also conscious of the need for good relations with the community and had supported financially

and otherwise any activity which could help in this respect. Certainly the company enjoyed good labour relations since the day it had commenced operations. Yet despite all this, one of the most serious production problems facing the company was the resistance of production workers to necessary changes. This resistance showed itself in numerous ways, such as grievances about piece rates, high labour turn-over, very low efficiency, restriction of output and considerable antagonism to management. An analysis of the performance of several hundreds of operators of similar standards showed that after change, only 38 per cent. ever recovered their previous standard of output. The other 62 per cent. either became chronically sub-standard or left altogether during their relearning period.

The first experiment took place with four groups matched as well as it is possible to match groups of industrial workers. The first group was asked to participate through elected representatives in working out the change; groups two and three participated wholly: all workers took part; group four was the control group which proceeded in the traditional way. The findings briefly were these. The degree of participation varied with the part that they had in the making of the decision. For instance, labour turnover and absenteeism was highest in the control group, which had not participated at all, and lowest in the groups all members of which had taken part. In terms of production, the control group never recovered its standard of output within the 30 days that management allowed this group to stay together at this low level of production; they were then dispersed. The workers who had participated through representatives recovered their former speed in two weeks. And those who had participated altogether recovered their former speed in a few days and were, at the end of the 30 days, 15 per cent. better than they had ever been.

Two-and-a-half months later opportunity occurred to bring together the 13 remaining members of the control group for a second experiment. This consisted of getting them to participate wholly in another change which was comparable to the first. This time the group speedily recovered and then excelled their previous performance just like the groups that had participated in the first experiment. The social scientists concluded that it was possible for management to modify greatly or to remove completely group resistance to changes in methods of work and the ensuing difficulties.

Just a few words in conclusion on the implications for management of these indications. Clearly the kind of attitude and relations which management has towards workers who participate is rather different from the attitudes comprised in the autocratic relationship

which we examined earlier. This is well brought out in studies comparing more and less successful foremen and supervisors. It is generally found that the good supervisor thinks mainly in terms of people, sees the organization mainly in terms of human relations, tries to look at people objectively, unemotionally and without passing moral judgment, makes an attempt to look at himself objectively as part of the whole organization and yet has confidence in his ability, although recognizing his limitations. Conversely the weak supervisor seems to think primarily in terms of things, not people; sees human relations problems simply as personality problems—for instance, he complains about the wrong type of people in his organization; he is blinded by his own ethical ideas, is insensitive to the thoughts and feelings of those around him, and finally feels that he knows all the answers in supervision. This difference was illustrated quantitatively in a recent study of the Survey Research Centre which compared the activities attributed to their own supervisors by high and low morale working groups.

The statement that the supervisor	*Was made in high morale groups by*	*Was made in low morale groups by*	*Difference*
Arranges the work and makes work assignments	67%	69%	— 2%
Enforces the rules	54%	54%	0%
Keeps the men supplied with material and tools	36%	41%	— 5%

The statement that the supervisor	*Was made in high morale groups by*	*Was made in low morale groups by*	*Difference*
Makes recommendations for promotions, transfers and pay increases	61%	22%	—39%
Keeps men informed on what is happening in the company	47%	11%	—36%
Keeps the men posted on how well they are doing	47%	12%	—35%
Hears complaints and grievances	65%	32%	—35%

In brief the supervisors of high morale groups were thought of as being significantly more concerned with matters of human relations. There is also some indication that they exercise more general and

less detailed supervision over their workers than the other supervisors who seem to feel that, even though in the same company, they themselves are under close personal supervision and need to supervise their workpeople just as closely.

Now much the same applies all the way up the management hierarchy. If the departmental manager expects real participation from his supervisors his relationship with them needs to be different than where he merely expects them to carry out orders; the ways they go to carry out the decisions jointly worked out and agreed will be diverse: they will vary to suit the special circumstances of the different working groups. And his colleagues may evolve different decisions with his supervisors to suit their special circumstances; and so on. The basic needs at each level are sensitivity to the varying problems and flexibility in dealing with them, as required. This applies to the supervisor's relationship with his workers, the manager's with his supervisors, the director's with his managers, Government's with industry. The organizational hierarchy can be a help or hindrance in this. You will have noted how closely this is related to real decentralization of responsibility and authority.

To sum up, there are, as we all know, really urgent human problems in industry. But incentives, as normally understood, do not cover them. What is required is a change in the underlying attitudes and relationships. On management's side this calls for greater sensitivity to the diverse problems of individual situations, and for sufficient flexibility to take account of them.

THE PROBLEM OF HUMANIST ACTION

by J. B. Coates

(Mr. Coates attended a summer conference at Bewdley on Humanist Thought and Action, and gives his criticism from the point of view of a Personalist in the article below. As an outcome of the conference, it is proposed to publish a comprehensive exposition of modern humanism.)

I GREATLY appreciated Mr. Blackham's kindness in inviting me to the Bewdley Conference, which I found as lively and stimulating as it was friendly. Yet I left the Conference in a state of some despondency, which was not wholly to be attributed, I think, to my having felt myself in the discussions to be in the position of Devil's Advocate. The truth was that I was disappointed, no doubt unreasonably, by the practical fruits of the Conference. I had hoped for clearer decisions, not only on the nature of humanism, but on

what humanists meant by "action" in terms of the present crisis of world civilization.

I was not too happy over the "rejections" which occupied so much of the time of the Conference, the rejection, in particular, of Marxism and Christianity. There is, no doubt, a sense in which humanists must reject these two great historical doctrines, as it is right, I think, on important issues of policy to attack the most influential of the movements to which they have given rise. Nevertheless humanism should not become either an anti-Communism or an anti-Christianity, and there is much that it has to learn both from Marxism and from contemporary Christian thinkers. Marx, in particular, is probably the greatest of all influences on the thought of our times, and I cannot doubt that his influence has been, in the main, a salutary one. A defect of the Bewdley Conference may well have been that it was, in spirit, too much pre-Marxist, by which I mean that its affirmations were made too much in general terms and too little dialectically, that is to say, in relation to the historical process and to the concrete contemporary situation in particular. To identify Marxism with the pseudo-Marxism of the Stalinists is an elementary error that humanists will, it need hardly be said, avoid. Modern humanism should be, in an important sense, an eclectic doctrine, a synthesis, able to create a new kind of unity that cuts across many traditional divisions and enmities, able to learn from Marxism, from Christian thinkers like Berdyaev, Niebuhr and Maritain, and from existentialists such as Jaspers, Sartre and Buber, as well as from the British empirical school with which I thought Mr. Blackham was too much inclined to identify it. A mere "rejection" of Marxism and Christianity, as of existentialism and personalism, may confirm the humanist movement in that sectarianism of the early rationalists (which expressed indeed a very natural and salutary reaction against the Christianity of their time) from which it is important now to escape.

Even the affirmations made at Bewdley seemed at times to have too much in them of the character of rejection. Both Mr. Blackham and Mr. Hawton were too much inclined to favour, in their advocacy of naturalism, empiricism and scientism (valuable as these approaches are) the rejection of the more intuitive, rationalistic and speculative approach which Whitehead has shown, in his *Science in the Modern World,* to be so invaluable as a check to an excessive preoccupation with brute fact. Again Mrs. Flemming's admirable statement of humanist ethics, one of the most constructive contributions to the Conference, began with a "rejection" of theism, a denial that we can look to a source "other than human" to help us

in our perplexity, though it was far from clear that the Conference was committed to a rejection of theism, and Mr. Hawton, in his comments in The South Place *Monthly Record,* remarks that the New Humanism is not likely to hurl anathemas against those who believe in some sort of God such as, for example, the God of the philosophers. It is true that humanism must reject *certain forms of theism,* as it must reject *certain forms* of contemporary Marxism. But it must beware of making its basis of unity rather what it rejects than what it affirms, so that it becomes primarily a cave of Adullam for those who have abandoned traditional orthodoxy. Mrs. Flemming's own admirable ethical affirmations would be accepted en bloc by almost any instructed modern theist, and it *is* with the instructed theist and not with the masses that we must be concerned when it is a question of our fundamental affirmations.

It should be noted also that there is a confusion in most humanist criticisms of the theistic position which it is important to recognize. Theism (and this applies also to the Christianity of the thinkers to whom I have already referred) does not deny that man should make the fullest use of his human powers and of his reason, that he should endeavour to realize the richest potentialities of the human, and to that end should make every legitimate use of science for "mundane reforms" (Mr. Hawton's phrase). It does not teach that this world should be neglected while we give our attention to some other-worldly sphere. What it does teach is that a right relation to God enables man to achieve his human objectives much better.

What is *the crux* of the theistic criticism of humanism? It is the belief that man can only reach the fulness of the human through his relation to the "more than human", to what theists would call the "divine". Two illustrations may help to make the point clear.

Let us consider, in the first place, the procedure of science. The achievements of the scientist depend upon his discovery, by observation and experiment, of an order in nature. This order is not the creation of the scientist. He finds it to be *there.* He can only discover it, in fact, through his humility towards the phenomenon; if he unduly intrudes his own prejudices and preconceptions, his work will not succeed. Far from the order of nature being the work of the scientist, a *human* creation, it displays a pattern of such baffling intricacy and surpassing wonder that it could not conceivably have been imagined if it had not been found in fact to exist. Truth is here indeed stranger than fiction. The discoveries of the scientist depend then upon respect for an order which is certainly not of man's making, which is "other than human", though human powers may to some extent discover it.

But it is on the presence of an order which is "other than human" in the sphere of personality-in-relationship that the division between the theist and the humanist may cut most deep and may have the most significant repercussions in the personal and social spheres. The theist holds that there is an order in the personal sphere as there is in the sphere of physical nature, and that our ability to solve our human problems depends upon our wisdom in the discovery of that order. Unfortunately man's researches in the moral order are subject to no automatic quantitative or experimental check such as exists in the field of the natural sciences. Faulty observation in the laboratory is readily discovered; a faulty ethical diagnosis is subject to no such generally agreed mode of verification. Man's inescapable limitations of outlook, his disposition to hubris and to the deceptions of self-love (from which only the wisest of us escape, and then only imperfectly), his tendency to rationalize his dominant passions or unconscious drives, lead him to multiform moral blunders, some of them of the gravest character. Humanists who have too great a faith in man's natural goodness are particularly prone to such errors. Scientism and scientific humanism may in practice be an expression of man's hubris, as Russell himself has pointed out. Stalinism is itself a humanism, with a limitation of perspective and understanding that may prove to be fatal to mankind. Theism is concerned mainly to point out that a humanism which does not recognize the existence of an "other than human" moral order which, like the order of physical nature, must be discovered, though by methods which in important respects differ from those used in the physical sciences (though in many respects they are the same) will be subject to grave errors. It would take too long to elucidate the nature of these methods or the concept of "grace" which plays such an important part in them.

I hope I may be pardoned this digression. It is inspired by a belief that humanism should not define itself in terms of a rejection of theism. I feel sure that in the pursuit of what I regard as the true objectives of humanism, certain forms of theistic and indeed of Christian thought should be recognized as an ally.

In case these observations have seemed to be somewhat belligerent, I should like to say that nothing could be further from my mind than to make an attack on humanism or humanists. I am concerned that humanists should concentrate their attention on the practical tasks that are ahead of them. I believe that we shall only discover our true friends and allies when we have defined our task and set earnestly to work on it. It seems to me that humanists are living at a moment of great historical opportunity, that a task

awaits our initiative which neither the Christian Churches nor the political parties (except as a response to powerful humanist pressure) are capable of performing. To carry it out requires some change of emphasis in humanist policy (I would almost say a Marxist change), a change in the direction of an increasingly social objective (with its correlative in the formation of pressure groups), a change in the direction of interpreting humanism less as the study of man qua man (man with his ethical and philosophical beliefs) and more as the study of man as "being-with-others-in-the-world", to use Heidegger's phrase, man in a certain social situation to which he has the responsibility of relating himself.

What is the situation that confronts man to-day? It is a situation so grave as to have led H. G. Wells, in his last published utterance, to declare that there was no longer any hope, that man would infallibly destroy himself through his inability to adjust himself and his institutions to the conditions which science has created. It is a situation which has been diagnosed by Toynbee in terms no more reassuring. Toynbee remarks that so far it has seemed to be man's inescapable destiny to build great civilizations by his creative response to environmental challenges, only to prove himself lacking in the wisdom to relax the tensions and heal the dissensions that large-scale political organization has brought in its train. The symptom of the approaching collapse of a civilization has always been, on Toynbee's analysis, an increasing inability to meet the challenge which is the final cause of its destruction, usually inter-state war. That decreasing ability to remove or diminish international tension is to all appearances with us to-day.

However much Wells and Toynbee may have pointed to the gravity of our position, neither has been defeatist in his practical responses. Both have argued, rightly in my view, that the situation can only be met by a far-reaching change in ethical attitudes, what Wells calls a biological adjustment and Toynbee calls a religious advance. Human nature is almost infinitely malleable, and there is no insuperable difficulty in making the needed adjustment by the use of the appropriate techniques, given the will to do it by a sufficiently influential and clear-minded élite. I have already suggested that it is to humanism that we can look most hopefully for an initiative in this matter. However much such thinkers as Berdyaev, realizing the nature of the change that is needed, may call for a revolution within Christianity to bring about a "transvaluation of values", the inherent conservatism and inertia of huge organizations like the Christian Churches will prevent such a revolution from being accomplished. I am inclined to think, indeed, that a revolu-

tion is needed within humanism also if it is to seize its great opportunity. Yet humanism is a comparatively young and flexible movement which is realizing, through such men as Mr. Blackham and Mr. Hawton, the need for a new orientation.

I can only indicate very briefly here the change which I believe is needed and the means by which it may be brought about. The human adjustment needed to relate man to his new situation can be expressed in two complementary ethical conceptions. In the language of personalism they are (1) the concept of *becoming a person,* (2) the concept of authenticity. To "become a person" is to accept responsibility for making and re-making oneself, to "choose oneself", in Kierkegaard's phrase. It means refusing to be content with secondhand judgments, with merely customary ethics, with merely traditional religion, with the ideas current in one's set or group, with the "culture concept" of one's little world. Neither, of course, does one merely reject these conceptions. "A person", traditional doctrine says, "is a spiritual substance of a free and rational character." One becomes a person, not by compliance, but by rational and responsible choice. Also one is related not merely to one's social background, but to a world of unrealized ethical and aesthetic possibilities. To be a person is to create oneself by one's relation to this world. (2) Authenticity depends upon confronting one's actual situation, taking account of it in all its aspects, and engaging with it. Man's relation to the world involves an element of choice, but it is not entirely a free choice. Man is in a certain situation from which he cannot escape, and from which he should not try to escape. It is a *social* situation in which his own action affects other people and affects political decisions. It is a situation which, if it is not grappled with, may destroy him or destroy the possibility of freedom for himself and for others. Authenticity depends upon two qualities, objectivity in grasping the nature of the situation, unlimited commitment in meeting it.

I have expressed these two fundamental conceptions in the language of personalism, but they can be expressed in many ways. The first conception is what Erich Fromm has called the rejection of "the authoritarian mind"; the second conception is what Mr. Blackham habitually refers to as "commitment". I have no time to develop the view (which can be readily demonstrated) that to apply these principles to our institutions of school and adult education would involve revolutionary changes. Our schools, in curriculum and methods and discipline, continue to be essentially authoritarian. Chaotic conditions (through the breakdown of traditional methods and a failure to grasp the principles of a new

order) are not uncommon, but an ordered freedom based on the principle of responsible choice is found scarcely anywhere, except perhaps at Mr. Curry's Dartington Hall. Meanwhile Christian religious instruction is a statutory obligation. Thus the state, or the Church, and not the responsible decision of the individual, is supposed to determine his religious views. A statutory enforcement of humanist doctrine would be no less mischievous. The harm of the situation is not merely in the attempt to impose on the individual choices which he should make for himself—it is that he is not provided with the conditions and the means by which he himself can make a genuine decision. The Christian instruction given is almost completely ineffectual if only because few of the teachers are believing Christians themselves, and the total effect of the system is that few students face the issues raised by Christianity and its various alternatives, while those who attempt to do so are given no adequate information or guidance.

In spite of some recent slight modifications of broadcasting policy, religious broadcasting is similarly based on the principle of denying an adequate hearing to non-Christian views. This policy, based on the desire to do nothing that might undermine traditional Christian belief, not only tends to destroy all genuine religious conviction, for it is widely recognized that the assumption of a Christian unity in this country is a hypocritical pretence, but helps to deny the ordinary person the knowledge of fact and opinion by which he might be led to embrace a responsible standpoint.

Moberly has pointed out that an equally grave situation exists in the Universities, where the main body of students, absorbed in their various specialisms, seldom confront the central issues of our civilization either on the basis of sufficient knowledge or with a will to make a considered decision. In remarking that the university should be "a community within which the chief contemporary intellectual positions may enter into a living encounter with each other", Moberly has stated the principle which should determine not only broadcasting policy but the policy of all higher and further education.

I am not suggesting that humanists should entirely abandon their traditional policy based on the small community holding its thinly attended lectures. But in the present condition of our educational institutions rapid progress on these lines is extremely improbable. A population nourished on "inert ideas" and "secondhand beliefs" handed out by authority is unprepared for the intellectual effort needed to appreciate humanist lectures. The primary problem is to revolutionize the methods of our schools and other educational

bodies. Reform at the higher levels, the level of broadcasting, the universities and further education, is of especial importance. An initiative exercised by humanists in these fields would be widely welcomed, and not merely in humanist circles. My protest against the humanist rejection of theism and Christianity is based on a belief that the effectiveness of humanist effort depends upon its seeking for co-operation outside its own ranks on great human projects.

The kind of projects I have in mind and the nature of which I have only been able to indicate briefly may lack the excitement and appeal of certain political panaceas, and they are long-term in their effect. They are nevertheless of the first order of importance in relation to the future of our civilization. In particular they are the projects which essentially come within the sphere of humanist aims.

It may be held that long-term plans can serve little purpose when it is short-term destruction that we fear, and that it is short-term policies which are most urgently needed. Perhaps I need hardly say that no short-term cuts exempt us from the duty of dealing with fundamental human maladjustments. But this does not mean that the short-term responsibilities of humanists should not be fully met. No humanism is "authentic" which has nothing to say or to recommend about great political crises such as the present crisis arising out of the situation in Korea. To hammer out a common policy if possible, and, if that is not possible, to give individual members the greatest possible assistance in framing their individual standpoints is our paramount duty.

I would like in conclusion to make two suggestions on this grave question of international policy. The first is that no remedy for the tension between East and West is possible except on the personal level, on the basis of Buberian dialogue. If negotiations between East and West continue to be of an eristical* and not a dialectical order, as they have been since the conclusion of World War II, there is no escape from World War III. The question then as to the nature of international discussion is the question which must be tackled as our number one priority. The plea must be continually pressed that discussions within closed doors shall take the place, as far as possible, of public discussion, and we must learn to employ negotiators who will refuse to be led into mere wrangling and continue to plead for real "meeting". I do not know if success is possible in such a policy, but I find it difficult to believe that it has been sufficiently pursued, or that any other has much chance of avoiding catastrophe.

* Eristical discussion takes the form of verbal war instead of dialectics.

The second is that if we find ourselves involved in war against the Russians, it must be in a United Nations' War and carried on for well-defined and limited objectives. Policies such as "a fight to a finish" and "unconditional surrender", should they be followed, might well mean a finish for *homo sapiens.*

THE QUESTION OF LIBERTY

by H. J. Blackham

ARGUMENTS which affirm liberty and arguments which would qualify liberty are in point when rational justification is in question, but when all that is in question is who shall kill whom, or when "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must," there is no point in the argument, as the Athenian envoys told the Melians. All philosophical discussion of liberty, then, presupposes a will to do what is justified by reason.

Reason may seek to curtail liberty on grounds of (1) an absolute doctrine (Plato, Hegel), (2) an absolute tradition (Hinduism), (3) an absolute expediency (Hobbes).

(1) If the truth about the nature of existence and the life of man is absolutely known, human good cannot be obtained by anybody outside the prescribed way, and there is justification for the constraint which keeps each within the conditions of the only possible good. Anybody who breaks loose is not only destroying his own interest but also producing effects which tend to distract and defeat the right-minded. Therefore those in authority are obliged by their absolute knowledge to maintain a severe discipline for the sake of an absolute good. On this ground, all theocracies and modern dogmatic historical materialism justify absolute power. The argument of course does not justify the arbitrary exercise of power: the authorities are servants of a doctrine, and their acts are justified or condemned by the doctrine. The doctrine, like the Aristotelian ideal of law, is impersonal passionless mind; it has authority (none greater), and the men who give it force are not resented as if they were imposing their own will. The fatal objection of reason to this position—so attractive throughout history to so many—is that it is always reasonable to call the absolute doctrine in question. There are always rival claims to the possession of absolute truth, and there is never any rational constraint which requires that one of the claims shall be acknowledged as exclusively legitimate. If a modern taste prefers the claim of scientific materialism to that of theological

dogma, the claim still falls far short of demonstrable certainty. All these concepts of existence, the dialetical not less than the theological and the formal or the organic, are concepts of a system; and the evidence is consistent with quite other conceptions of the nature of existence, on which it would be quite impossible to found an absolute doctrine of human good. Therefore, in reason, any of these doctrines can claim only the relative status of an hypothesis; but this is not a legitimate basis for drastic policies of social constraint.

This conclusion must be accepted by the reasonable, but nobody should let it blind him to the inconvenience of the fact that there is no agreed, and perhaps no attainable (Jaspers), unity and totality of knowledge. The multiplication of specialisms makes men strangers to each other, and the lack of a grand strategy directing their labours may doom their efforts to increasing stultification. Nietzsche warned his time of the danger of "science as self-anaesthetic," as a disinterested and unending pursuit of the truth which runs away from the demand for decisions and commanding aims. Ortega y Gasset has elaborated this warning as *The Modern Theme.* He asks: "Is it not a theme worthy of a generation which stands at the most radical crisis of modern history, if an attempt be made to oppose the tradition and see what happens if instead of saying, 'life for the sake of culture,' we say, 'culture for the sake of life'?" The issue comes home as a practical problem in the question of how to give coherence and formative value to university education in those western universities in which the teaching has not the official imprint of Marxism nor of Christianity. The great prestige of the German universities during the nineteenth century promoted the ideal of the "liberal" university, as an institution absolutely independent of outside control, devoted to disinterested research and the attainment of excellence according to the highest standards of scientific scholarship. This ideal, criticized by Nietzsche and Ortega y Gasset as the modern form of mysticism, is criticized also by Croce as an unrealistic and futile attempt to found a free culture on a perfected bureaucratic administration, ignoring the dynamic permeant perpetual presence of politics. Thus the very uncertainties which call in question any absolute doctrine that would justify a certain social order call for decisions which cannot be absolute but must be definite and regulative. This seems to narrow the gap between the position of the dogmatist and that of the person who tries to act on his rational rejection of dogmatic claims and to meet its consequences.

(2) An absolute tradition holds only so long as it holds the

loyalty of those who uphold it. Tradition is inert and resistant, by definition not adaptable and resourceful in meeting new problems, and therefore in a world of rapid and violent change it is called upon to play a losing game. It becomes impossible to maintain it intact, and once breached its authority is impaired. All the same, a strong tradition may show an amazing tolerance of new elements and develop a thriving eclecticism. Hinduism, for example, has proved remarkable in this way and may gain ascendancy in the new Indian state. Even in such a case, no conservative order is likely to be allowed to sleep in peace in the modern world with the clamour and pressure of new aspirations and new possibilities. In a conflict of this kind, the rational ground of the conservative case is, as Burke stated it, in the massive evidence of an historic society as a going concern, alive with sentiment and binding together the past, present, and future; no blue-print of rational social functions and relations is a substitute for this organic continuous social existence, which, although it may be as ill designed for its rational functions as the rudimentary systems of nature are in the eyes of an engineer, has the decisive advantage of being alive. The answer of history is that the new claims and demands prevail. If conservative elements gain a temporary ascendancy, the continuance of that ascendancy depends upon a progressive liberal policy. The tradition is no longer absolute.

(3) Hobbes argued that absolute sovereignty as the guarantee of social order is absolutely expedient, since it is the necessary condition of civil peace and personal morality. The force of his argument comes home in every state of emergency when basic social order is imperilled or has broken down. Then the government may acquire or require the absolute authority necessary to guarantee or to restore basic social order. Social order becomes the first public necessity when it is not already secured. When basic order is not in question, there is no absolute expediency to justify absolute power. Nevertheless, there are other states of national emergency in which governments reasonably require to exercise exceptional powers over their subjects. The temporary dictatorships appointed in emergencies by the Roman Republic make a famous historical example. In every modern country in time of war, rights and liberties of the subject are liable to be suspended in so far as they impede the war effort.

This case of an absolute expediency justifying absolute power may be looked at in a way that assimilates it to the case of an absolute doctrine. The absolute doctrine justifies absolute power because it supposes an absolute knowledge of human good, and

opposition can be only a public mischief. An emergency gives absolute and unquestioned priority to a particular public good, which is tantamount to a temporary absolute knowledge of human good justifying temporary absolute power. In a hierarchy of values, the basic stronger values (public order, national independence, health, etc.) have an undisputed priority when they are in danger, whereas when they can be taken for granted as safely secured the weaker and higher values become prominent and important, and these being more disputable give legitimate scope for differences and options (Hartmann). On this general principle, the first duty of a government, however constituted, is to safeguard or establish the basic values, and not to suppress the differences in regard to other values. This is a principle which would seem to beg the question, since it presupposes agreement about basic values and repudiates an absolute knowledge which could resolve the differences about other values. Even admitting difference about basic values, the principle could still be of service in recognizing legitimate and illegitimate spheres of absolute government, leaving to argument the actual delimitation. Thus the question of justifying the present dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union might be considered without reference to an absolute doctrine (a total philosophy of history and of human good) in terms of a prolonged emergency: on this assumption, to build socialism is a national task, second only to national security, which demands the will and effort of all without exception; socialism is a basic value which is not to be questioned nor opposed, but when it is securely established there are higher values about which there may be differences. This is substanially the theory of Marx and Lenin. The dictatorship of the proletariat is required during "an entire historical epoch" in order to accomplish the next step in history, inspiring and informing a united effort to build socialism and eliminating all opposition. When the achievement is complete, the State, which exists for violence, has no function; the government of men has become the administration of things; the liberty of personal aims is consummated, because they are no longer in conflict with social aims and they enjoy the means of fulfilment. The theoretical objection to this attempt to justify the dictatorship of the proletariat on the ground of absolute expediency is that Marxist socialism is, in effect, not a basic value but the whole scale of values, and that during "an entire historical epoch" the claims of socialism suspend and supersede all other claims for the sake of an absolute liberty to be achieved in a society in which the political problem is definitively solved. This is another version of a perfected administration found-

ing a free culture, criticized by Croce in the case of nineteenth century Germany. To admit only differences which can make no political difference is an absolutism in principle, beyond the justification of expediency, which can justify itself only by appeal to an absolute doctrine of human good. Thus the metaphysical and utopian elements of Marxist doctrine are reinstated.

Nevertheless, in practice the exigencies of the task of building socialism have modified the doctrine, for it became plain that law and rights could successfully be treated as nothing but instruments of oppression during the attack on the bourgeois social order but that they were necessary instruments of social organization during the government of the dictatorship. The interregnum between the old regime and the communist utopia, the "entire historical epoch" of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is not a suspension of law and rights preliminary to their atrophy, but an elaboration of new laws, guaranteeing certain freedoms and rights within the framework of a socialist state and appropriate to a socialist order of society. Law, the security of law, is rehabilitated explicitly by Stalin as a necessary idea, and the actual laws elaborated and enforced give a permanent structure to the new society; liberty ceases to be the end-product of dictatorship, whole and final, and becomes what it always is, a perpetual task, the adjustment of ceaseless particular strivings for liberation. In this way, established law begins to take the place of absolute doctrine in the *de jure* limitation of political power; and this rehabilitation of law as such involves objective procedures and traditional safeguards without which law is not itself. It might be said that the establishment of economic democracy involves in practice the appropriation in principle of political democracy. A *de facto* set of power relations is regulated and regularized in operation by law, and progressively machinery is worked out for dealing with claims and safeguarding acknowledged freedoms and satisfying established rights. The doctrine which at first is a substitute for law is gradually modified by the development of laws and institutions.

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The individual is without exception member of a society and subject to government, and for that reason has to justify his claims to rights and liberties just as much as the government has to justify its laws and actions. When the government's demands are authorized by constitutional powers and mandate or statute, and when the citizen's rights and liberties are enforceable at law, there is of course no question of justification. But even the law which justifies the government or the citizen is open to philosophical question as

well as to political challenge. The old natural rights conferred by natural law may be as mythical as the social contract, but it remains true that positive law is always the starting point and never the last word. The strictly personal liberties of the subject are only a small part of what is involved. All the main activities by which societies live and progress may claim autonomy or may be treated as instruments of government. No government can allow complete autonomy to industry, education, law, the arts, science, religion, yet each of these activities develops its own aims and criteria and demands some independence. Left to themselves, they tend to develop as ends in themselves and to set up idols or become closed corporations or vested interests. Subordinated as instruments of government policy, they tend to lose their integrity and vitality and the principle of self-development. On the other hand, some may dwindle for want of government action. The liberal case for the autonomy or maximum independence of each certainly needs to be revised; nor is there any logical connexion between the autonomy of one and the autonomy of all; but there is a sociological connexion, for a government with a social policy which requires the close control of any one of these activities is likely to become interested in them all. Even so, it is quite possible for a government to mix far-reaching control over industry with ample freedom for all other activities: there is no necessary connexion.

Industry is the primary problem, for in this field only is it possible for the "over-mighty subject" to appear, disposing of power at home and abroad which may be able successfully to defy the government. The liberal ideal of the good society realized through public control by law of the independent activities of a pluralist society (Lippmann) has to meet the objection in the case of industry that the legislature is itself strongly influenced if not absolutely controlled by the powerful interests, and that even if the law is enacted its enforcement can be resisted and evaded. The argument that fully effective national co-ordination and control of industrial policy is only possible if a large sector of key industries is nationally owned and operated, can only be met by a business community so public spirited and co-operative that the argument is shown to be wanton. The case has to be left to national circumstances. By whatever methods they are produced, those who run modern industry are required to combine the skill, drive, and enterprise of business executives with the restraint and discipline of civil servants subject to public policy. Of course, public policy is the first question of all and reflects the struggle of interests. But public policy is never the mere resultant of the opposed forces, for it is always complicated by overriding

national interests, underlying common interests, hard facts, objective standards, sentiments, traditions, and other such factors, more or less faithfully reflected in the alternative policies which go to the making of the policy which gains the day. This complex of politics is peculiar to each national situation, but there is the broad difference between those countries in which the right of opposition to the party in power is safeguarded and facilitated and those in which opposition is suppressed. The suppression is bound up in its origin and aim with the conception of state, law, and religion as nothing but instruments of power. The need of a party in absolute power to modify this conception in order that law shall gain the respect and give the security without which there can be no stable social organization produces again the seed of democratic politics.

The independence of the legal profession is not necessarily a good thing, since it may become a powerful corporation preying upon the public, but the independence of the judiciary has long been regarded in the West as an indispensable safeguard of personal liberty. With the multiplication of regulations in a welfare state and the institution of administrative tribunals to deal with grievances, the question loses its old simplicity. In England, which has no Administrative Courts, as in France, to check the misuse of power, the problem has still to be dealt with. Apart from this technical task, the legal profession as a whole is called on to strike the balance between the demands of a complex positive public policy and the personal interests of aggrieved parties. Without formal change, under the pressure of social policies, the profession tends to become a public service, with a new conception of professional ideals and a new professional discipline. (Under the same influences, this change affects other professions: teachers, doctors, farmers, as well as industrial workers and employers, are called on through their professional associations to take part in the formation of national policies and in giving effect to them. The response to such demands induces a new corporate professional outlook and requires a new professional discipline, and tends to make the profession a public service whether or not its members are salaried State officials. The rights and interests of the individual worker which the professional association was formed to safeguard and advance are overlaid and perhaps overridden by the positive content of the national policy which the profession is called on to make good and for the origination of which it is in part responsible. The defensive alliance thus becomes a social partnership and questions of professional independence and personal rights become confused and complicated. The large outcome is in the development of social resources and the expansion

of "practicability of purpose" (Whitehead), which is perhaps the most satisfactory positive definition of freedom in the modern world.) In the philosophy of law, the vexed question of natural law, as the ultimate criterion of justice by which positive laws were justified or condemned, may be considered as superseded by the best practice of contemporary nations as idealized and formulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of UNO.

Aristotle, holding that the main object of all good legislation is the moral training of society, believed that the business of education was to form mind and manners in the spirit of the constitution. Similarly, all religious sects have fought hard for their own educational institutions in order to bring up their young in their own strictness. With the result that others have idealized and fought for the secular neutral school in which there is no ideological teaching. Under the influence of John Dewey, training for freedom, adaptability, and social change has become a widespread educational ideal, criticized by others as producing rootless, restless, evacuated persons: their own essentialist philosophy of education would judge the training by its success in transmitting experience, implanting an active core of proved wisdom. Education is handicapped and frustrated if it cannot be wholly education for a society and has to be in part education against a society or education in a sectarian ideology within the society. Thus the claim of education to independence may signify malaise rather than health, the sickness of a divided society. Nevertheless, complete adjustment, education which produces the individual in harmony with his society, although an ideal, may look pitifully parochial from the outside. Serious free encounter with all the serious alternatives seems to be a necessary condition of genuine maturity, and therefore of any wise education. In any case, the modern revolution in education, which instead of driving the child through the traditional curriculum adopts or adapts the educational materials and methods for the purpose of stimulating, developing, and satisfying the child according to his aptitudes, interests, and abilities, has introduced into the educational process a universal core which is independent and objective.

Religion would seem to have the clearest claim of all to independence, and indeed John Macmurray has argued that "so long as the field of religion is excluded from the competence of political authority, everything is excluded which democracy requires," for he means by religion the realized creative community. Yet Marx put religion with law and the state as nothing but instruments of oppression. Historically, religion has been sometimes an instrument

of oppression, sometimes an agent of liberation. Today, any religion which is genuinely without political interests and teaches obedience to the government is fairly sure of toleration for its beliefs and practices, and any religion which enters politics cannot reasonably claim a privileged position. The struggle of religions at the present time to retain or gain privileges, principally in the field of education, has little to do with religious liberty in the old sense of toleration and freedom of conscience, more nearly universal now (in the narrow sense of freedom of worship) than ever before.

Whereas industry and religion in the modern democratic state claim and seek both autonomy and financial aid and privilege, it is rather the government which takes the initiative in according financial aid to the arts. This has been on a lavish scale in the Soviet Union and tentative and limited in the Western democracies so far. In both cases, the prime intention has been to bring the enjoyment of the arts to the people. The direct use of the arts for didactic purposes tends to be self-defeating. The effort of Zhadanov to get the Russian composers to produce popular Soviet music seems to have been an effort to bring music to the people in the way that would help to make them feel in harmony with their society; and it seems to have proved the futility of the methods employed. Freedom for the arts has always meant generous but discerning encouragement by people of knowledge and taste, and this remains true even when the government exercises patronage on behalf of the people. The arts will anyhow respond to social conditions and influences.

Science is the life-blood of modern industrial societies and any impoverishment of science enfeebles their existence. Modern science and technology require large-scale organization and heavy endowment. The neglect and frustration of science in the West before the war for want of adequate organization and public finance was bitterly resented by scientists, and accounts for the faith of many scientists in the revolution which refounds society on unrestricted technology of production administratively freed from economics and politics. In this view, the freedom of science, far from meaning the autonomy of science, means its liberation from bondage to a market economy and direct employment by the government for maximum production, and this freedom is identified with the welfare of the masses and a generous social ideal. The fear of some scientists that this means the bondage of "pure" science to technology working under the demand for immediate results is not groundless. On the other hand, there is every reason why public policy should learn to appreciate the need for and the condi-

tions of pure research and should provide adequate means for it. The exigencies of war required the Western democratic governments to take a much more vigorous initiative in the effective organization of science and technology, with results that have established a new phase in the development and application of science in the West. On the other hand, the dream of a pure technology freed from the artificial restrictions of economics and politics has disclosed limits and problems of its own in the Soviet Union.

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If freedom is defined as harmony of the individual with the society in which he finds his life (Hegel), or as practicability of purpose (Whitehead), it is possible that there is more freedom in the Soviet Union than in many parts of what is called the free world. But if freedom is defined as equal security for all under the law, or as the right of each to be represented directly or indirectly in the making of every decision that affects his interests, or as the right of opposition to the government, the Western democracies have a greater measure of freedom. It may be assumed that no definition of social freedom is tolerable today that does not include all these elements as essential. It may also be assumed that all governments will be increasingly obliged to adopt the common objectives of the welfare state in their positive provisions, and that within the Soviet Union and other communist countries the problem of establishing and enforcing rights against the abuse of power by the executive will be dealt with by legal provision. The greatest obstacle to this *rapprochement* of systems and assimilation of standards is the strained relations between East and West with all the economic and political consequences. Until the power vacua in Europe and Asia are filled by independent Powers and until the social democracies in the West have proved themselves able to solve their problems, there is no reason to expect a *détente*. The one thing which can be criticized without reservation is the theoretical foundation of communism in an absolute doctrine, which would justify absolute government and all the means employed by an intransigent politics. The absolute doctrine could not establish itself philosophically, but serves efficiently as an instrument of discipline and power. The rigid exclusion of all alternatives is a deformation of spirit and wreaks an incalculable injury on humanity. The same criticism must apply to any other pretenders to an absolute doctrine who use it to justify the pursuit and exercise of power.

Liberty, it is recognized, cannot be guaranteed by institutions. Still less is it at the call of rebelliousness and negative, critical attitudes. It cannot survive unless it produces good results; it has

continuously to prove its social utility. That is to say, it is only in so far as each type of liberty is understood, valued, demanded, and responsibly and fruitfully used that it is justified, and produces the good instances which may be adduced in its favour by honest argument.

THE HUMANIST TRADITION

(*Ecclesiasticus,* chapter 38, xxiv-xxxiv)

The wisdom of the scribe cometh by opportunity of leisure:
And he that hath little business shall become wise.
How shall he become wise that holdeth the plough,
That glorieth in the shaft of the goad,
That driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours,
And whose discourse is of the stock of bulls?
He will set his heart upon turning his furrows;
And his wakefulness is to give his heifers their fodder.
So is every artificer and workmaster,
That passeth his time by night as by day;
They that cut gravings of signets,
And his diligence is to make great variety;
He will set his heart to preserve likeness in his portraiture,
And will be wakeful to finish his work.
So is the smith sitting by the anvil,
And considering the unwrought iron:
The vapour of the fire will waste his flesh;
And in the heat of the furnace will he wrestle with his work:
The noise of the hammer will be ever in his ear,
And his eyes are upon the pattern of the vessel;
He will set his heart upon perfecting his works,
And he will be wakeful to adorn them perfectly.
So is the potter sitting at his work,
And turning the wheel about with his feet,
Who is always anxiously set at his work,
And all his handywork is by number;
He will fashion the clay with his arm,
And will bend its strength in front of his feet;
He will apply his heart to finish the glazing;
And he will be wakeful to make clean the furnace.

All these put their trust in their hands;
And each becometh wise in his own work.
Without these shall not a city be inhabited,
And men shall not sojourn nor walk up and down therein.
They shall not be sought for in the council of the people,
And in the assembly they shall not mount on high;
They shall not sit on the seat of the judge,
And they shall not understand the covenant of judgement:
Neither shall they declare instruction and judgement;
And where parables are they shall not be found.
But they will maintain the fabric of the world;
And in the handywork of their craft is their prayer.

REVIEWS

LIVING AS A HUMANIST. Essays by H. J. Blackham, Virginia Flemming, Ursula Edgcumbe, M. L. Burnet. Chaterson, 6s.

During the past fifty years the intellectual climate has undergone such a profound change that the classic expositions of Rationalism have little more than an historical interest to-day. A similar fate has overtaken the writings of those who shaped the Ethical movement. The great tidal wave of Victorian unbelief has spent itself and we are no longer agonized by doubts about the Trinity or the authorship of the Pentateuch. We are more troubled about what we should do than what we can reasonably believe. In an era of security it is easy enough to sit on the fence and trust that the slow workings of a law of inevitable progress will save us the trouble of interfering. But in a period of revolution the fence takes on the ominous shape of a barricade and argument alone does not decide the issue. Some of us are in the unhappy predicament of having our wishes realized, only to find that we didn't really want what we thought we did. The hard-boiled secularist, for example, who believed that religion was the root of all evil, that everything would come right if priestcraft and superstition were swept away, shows a marked lack of enthusiasm at the realization of his programme throughout more than a sixth of the world. So, too, the fifty-seven varieties of socialists who once sang the Red Flag with evangelical fervour and preached the coming millennium: when reminded of what they said in the past they are apt to change the subject.

We have suddenly been taken at our word; a salutary but disconcerting experience. Hence the demand to be real, to tear up our merely paper philosophies, to be authentic. It is no light matter

to break away from the traditions and institutions of the social group to which we belong; it is a grave decision, and if we finally take it we must accept all the consequences. If we really think, for example, that Christianity is not true, then we must not only reject it but take a positive stand in defence of a tenable alternative. There is this to be said for a man who joins the Catholic Church or the Communist Party: he crosses the Rubicon, he doesn't drift with a routed army of intellectual refugees looking for an ivory tower that isn't there.

These reflections are prompted by a volume of essays some of which have already been published in *The Plain View*. They are addressed to a thoughtful and increasing section of the community which finds itself unable to accept either Christianity or Soviet Communism. They propose Humanism as an alternative. Every reader of this journal should study this book afresh, for even if some of the articles have been read in isolation they take on a richer quality as an organic whole. I should like to think that every member of the Ethical and Rationalist movements would also ponder on this subtle and sophisticated attempt to re-define the tradition from which both movements emerged, and present an attitude to the theoretical problems of the day that can be adopted without doing violence either to our essential nature or our intellectual integrity. Not, indeed, that it can be "adopted" in the sense that one accepts a set of propositions on somebody else's authority; it would be more correct to describe most of this book as an incitement to discover what is already implicit in the attitude of those of us whose souls are not naturally Christian. The journey is an adventurous one—inward, to realize what is specific to man; outward, to realize our communion with countless others who have made up the apostolic succession of Humanism. In two brilliant essays Mr. H. J. Blackham deals with the rejection of Christianity and Marxism, and The Sufficiency of the World. He also contributes a general summing-up. "We reject Christianity because we think that it is not true". Admittedly science cannot deliver a knock-out blow, but "the detailed picture which the sciences have built up stroke by stroke shows a world which does not in the least resemble the world delineated by the Christian epic." Marxism is not "false" in this sense; but it is dogmatic and authoritarian, whereas Humanism is empirical. The Humanist does not compensate for loss of a paradise in the hereafter by dreaming of a future paradise on earth. "The Humanist alternative is to say Yes to life in the world as we find it here and now, to accept it unconditionally, and to make oneself responsible for it and identified with it."

Similar stress on the acceptance of the limits of our earthly condition and possible knowledge is made in a sensitive and wholly admirable account by Mrs. Virginia Flemming of "Life without Revelation". No supernatural channel of grace is needed for "sympathetic consciousness of the claims of others"; experience shows that we can attain this without the formal religious aids. Nor should it be assumed that the inner life of the spirit requires belief in a transcendent God.

The same theme is approached by Miss Ursula Edgcumbe from a fresh angle. She appeals to the richness of concrete experience, away from what is dead, abstract, or merely "in the future". And she makes the point that values are to the Humanist what doctrines are to the Christian. To turn away from real possibilities of happiness here and now, and declare that all is vanity, shows ignorance of how to live. "Humanism, if it fails to give the person a scope in life in which he may know elation, is worthless". The Humanist, no less than the Christian mystic, has his ecstasies; but he finds them in the beauty and wonder and immediacy of experience. From yet another perspective, Mr. Burnet vigorously denounces all forms of Utopianism and religion as fantasy thinking; but in briefly etching the "cosmic background" against which the human problem should be seen, his desire to be definite imperils the rejection of dogmatism. The most interesting part of his analysis to me was the suggestion that most religions, and even some forms of Humanism, were a revolt against the tyranny of time; but it seems a little hard on the sculptors and cathedral-builders to dismiss their "memorials" as a lamentable sign of maladjustment! Mr. Burnet makes the surprising statement that "contrary to the usual picture painted by the Marxists of religion forced upon an unwilling proletariat, there is in fact a very real consumer demand for religion". I do not think that Marxists deny the existence of this demand; they regard it as inevitable in a class-society. They regard religion as a socially-conditioned fantasy, and although I do not believe this can be the whole story, it is surely an advance on the over-simplified thesis of Feuerbach, which seems much nearer to Mr. Burnet's own view. The New Humanism will miss one of the sharpest dilemmas of our age if it fails to distinguish between valuable and harmful fantasies. The Utilitarians—and still more the Marxists—were driven to neglect the demand for a personal and inner life in order to make sorely-needed improvements in social life; but there is a crying need to redress the balance. In his early days, John Stuart Mill struggled hard against the spell of Coleridge, and unhappily he was too successful. The spiritual dryness and sheer philistinism of some

nineteenth century positivists will continue to act as a repellent unless we make it abundantly plain that we are not merely concerned with town-planning in what T. S. Eliot so mordantly describes as "the well-lighted desert of atheism". Marx injected Hegelianism into the corpse of vulgar materialism and brought it to life; to-day a fresh attempt is being made to make the old materialism dynamic by giving it a dose of existentialism. This is no doubt a healthy protest against the narrowness of the

Levelling, rancorous, rational sort of mind
That never looked out of the eyes of a saint
Or out of a drunkard's eye.

But I doubt whether a rejuvenated materialism has the slightest chance of establishing itself, except as yet another small sect, against the dynamic appeal of such supple and experienced rivals as Marxism and Christianity. We would do better to make one of our aims the recovery of that inner life which Marxism deadens, and for which Christianity exacts too heavy a price, by constructing a speculative philosophy that will satisfactorily interpret the rich and subtle experiences to which both Mrs. Flemming and Miss Edgcumbe testify so movingly. I hope we shall not be so intimidated by the bogey of "marginal fantasies" that we reject the insights of the greatest figures in the Humanist tradition in favour of small-fry freethinkers clinging to the belief that Ernst Haeckel solved the riddle of the universe. There is a movement waiting to be born; it would be dismal if through pre-natal errors it were stillborn.

HECTOR HAWTON

TESTAMENT FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE. An Essay in the Application of Scientific Method to Human Problems. By Barbara Wootton. Allen & Unwin, 15s.

Professor Wootton writes beautifully because she is an unusually accomplished and effective teacher with a lively mind and a care for clarity and conciseness of expression. The argument of her new book deserves the warmest welcome in this journal, since her cause is our own. She is in the direct line of descent from Bentham and Mill, but of course has learned from their mistakes and inadequacies, and this is the core of the modern humanist tradition which has to be remodelled and enlarged for its contemporary job. (Professor Wootton deprecates the use of the word "humanism" by those who explicitly reject dogmatic systems. Although humanism is not one other rival dogmatic system, it is a positive

alternative to the dogmatic systems it rejects, and Mrs. Wootton's total reliance upon the method of empirical science plus her value judgments beyond the ultimate limits of science commit her to something definite enough to have a name. Besides, Christians habitually use the word to describe this position. Lastly, it is important to the bewildered that those who stand on the same ground in rejecting dangerous and dominant alternatives and accepting a common approach should acknowledge their tradition, their cohesion, and their ideal.)

The argument moves from a descriptive analysis of scientific method and its relevance to social studies to a consideration of some of the obstructions to its universal application to human problems. Science does not meet with success if it does not meet with public confidence, and some of our major institutions and prevalent habits of mind are stubbornly pre-scientific, not only the dogmatic religious and political systems but also the democratic party politics and press. Particular mischief in social studies has been done by the treatment of society and of civilizations on the analogy of an organism and by the Marxist handling of the theories of Marx. Mrs. Wootton has an easy time with the pretensions of the theologians to the authority of an autonomous science, and warns them of the wrath to come when the social sciences become really interested in pressing their investigations into the religious field. She then turns her attention to morals and the arts: what can science do about these? If anybody thinks that scientific method does not apply to the arts, let him weigh well the alternative, which is to have no alternative to the stream of irritating vapour that is poured into the conventional moulds of æsthetic theory and criticism. Anybody who dares to suggest that something factual and cautious might be more reasonable and more helpful ought to be encouraged. Indeed, it is a view that is gaining ground.

In her treatment of morals, although she recognizes an ultimate limit of science where there is a final choice of ends, she goes to biological science for a suggestion of what the end should be, and finds that organisms have a directive activity which strives to fulfil a normal life-cycle of self-maintenance, development, and reproduction. This formula applied to man, with the inclusion of mental development, gives a basis for a system of moral values and sets science to work to establish norms and the means of realizing them. Perhaps the formula is eligible, but why should it be expected to get more votes than many another of the innumerable excellent candidates for the supreme office of summum bonum? If this is the line of argument it derives rather from Aristotle, surely,

than from Bentham, and has still something to learn from his handling of it, for it assumes his theoretical structure without the justification of his assumptions. Why build a moral theory on some abstract end always obviously unexceptionable if abstract enough? Why not begin with the concrete data in the field of moral relationships so that one learns to see what is wanted? The new formula merely perpetuates the failure of 2,000 years of discussion—if failure it is. This is not to say, of course, that a theory of normal psychological development is not a big part of ethical theory, nor that a competent modern ethical theory will not be heavily dependent upon psychology, nor that earlier ethical theory is not invalidated by its obsolete psychology. What is complained of is that a promising scientific approach is to be put in the place of an unpromising old-fashioned approach by putting into the same theoretical structure a new formula taken from a relevant science. But this is an exceedingly baffling and complex field of thought which has vexed subtle thinkers to small purpose for long enough, and although boldness, for that reason, is a considerable merit (it was Bentham's), it should be a wary seasoned boldness and not simple exposure to certain death: although there is no doubt at all that science has a great deal to do in this field, it should be set to work cautiously and profitably and not harnessed without ado to a total theory of the old type.

However, there should really be nothing but praise for Mrs. Wootton's persuasive appeal to our enthusiasm for scientific method applied to all human problems. We are bound to agree that there is no other source of knowledge, and Mrs. Wootton's own candid reasonableness is as attractive and refreshing as her lucid reasoning is convincing.

Two Worlds in Focus. Studies of the Cold War. National Peace Council, 5s.

The Korean Crisis. By Sydney D. Bailey. National Peace Council, 1s. 6d.

Two Worlds in Focus suffers from the fact that its authors never make up their minds whether the work is a spiritual exercise for the benefit of their own souls or a practical study in statecraft. Furthermore, Professor Mackinnon introduces into it some of the new Christian theology which further complicates the issue. Christianity used to be a thing for the individual conscience, nowadays it is brought into secular affairs to the further confusion of the issues involved. It is the Christian reply to the Marxist: "You think that

you can be awkward, well so can we". Incidentally, Olaf Stapledon does a wonderful bareback riding act in which he jumps lightly from Marxist hack to Christian nag and from these to Humanist cob in such faultless style that one feels that it is a pity that there is not a fourth or a fifth steed for him to demonstrate his prowess with. All the differences between the faiths are merely perversions of those faiths, purification is all that is required, Stapledon holds.

Wright W. Miller deals with the question of Capitalism v. Socialism and examines the writings of Marxism to find out whether war is held to be inevitable. Marx himself allowed for the possibility of a peaceful solution but Lenin, and later Stalin, ruled out the escape route offered by parliamentary democracy by their insistence that the later development of monopoly capitalism, with the imperialism that this would bring, would inevitably lead to attacks on any Socialist state that might be set up. The last scriptural pronouncement on the subject was some twenty-five years ago and it seems unlikely that there will be any change in fundamental dogma now. From time to time, however, Stalin has given interviews with newspapermen and politicians to the effect that there is no necessary conflict between different economic systems, but such statements are probably for export only. Miller holds that although according to the book, war is inevitable, the building of a peaceful Socialism in countries in the West, however much it might be resented by the Communists, might have the effect of allaying fears. Kenneth Ingram in a contribution *Can the Two Worlds Co-operate?* serves only to accentuate the difficulty by listing the international bodies on which the Soviets could serve but do not do so. Stapledon points to hope in saying that the Communists have not perverted values like the Nazis. They believe in building a good life for the people though they have no hesitation in using force and cruelty as instruments to bring it about. The Communists are primitive, he says, and this is held to account for much that they do.

There is a failure to recognize two fundamental factors in this work, the apocalyptic nature of the Marxist vision and the feeling of the people that hold it of being history's élite. It is not only what one believes but how one believes. It is the apocalyptic nature of the vision of Communists that makes them thoroughly intolerant and dangerous, and people who think in this way are not truly representative of a community. Russian history and the Russian environment no doubt play a considerable part in determining Communist thought and action, but we must bear in mind that the rulers of the Kremlin are less representative of the Russian people than rulers usually are.

Kenneth Ingram says wisely that what we do ourselves is important. Outside the Communist-controlled countries lies three-quarters of the population of the world comprising peoples of all colours and differences in development. It is an illusion to think that if only Russia would behave in a friendly manner all international difficulties would be resolved. Here is work for us to do in resolving all the difficulties which face us, whereas Russia offers us few points of contact. The world is in the state in which it is to-day very much because it has not been realized that peace is a dynamic thing, something to be built.

The point is made by one writer that rearmament may make us militarily minded. Can it not be that our lack of armament makes the Soviet Union militarily minded? The fighting that took place between Russia and Poland in 1920 when the fighting line twice swayed from one side of Poland to the other appeared to indicate that the Soviet Union was willing to take any territory that was to be had cheap, but that she preferred peace rather than the exerting of undue military effort. The whole question of peace and war between Russia and the West seems to stand on whether this is still the Russian position. The Nazis liked war for its own sake as well as for what was expected from it; it is to be hoped that this is not the case with the Communist. Substantial rearmament would appear to be a wise step; weakness plays the game of Satan in providing temptation. It is desirable that the nations of the West should make their intention clear; friendship may blossom with strength.

The Korean Crisis provides background information to the present war and the events leading up to it. M. L. Burnet

John Locke's Political Philosophy: Eight Studies. By J. W. Gough. The Clarendon Press.

J. W. Gough presents us with an interesting inquiry into the fundamental concepts of Locke's Political Philosophy. In a series of researches on the law of nature, the rights of the individual and private property, the idea of trusteeship, toleration, etc., the author clarifies Locke's teaching in its various aspects. The research is based, in addition to the usual sources of Locke's political writings, on the Lovelace Collection of Locke's paper in the Bodleian Library. It would be outside the limits of this review to go into a detailed account and criticism of Mr. Gough's study, but it is worthwhile to dwell on some main points.

Locke's political philosophy has usually been interpreted as individualistic, and Liberals saw in it the cornerstone of their con-

struction. Mr. Gough, however, also puts forward the different approach of Mr. W. Kendall, who sees in Locke a representative of the authoritarian approach to political philosophy, even out-Rousseauing Rousseau. Mr. Gough tries to do justice to both interpretations, and shows that both could find support in Locke's phraseology. Thus the *establishment* of the political state by social contract is conditioned by *individual* consent, while the *functioning* of the state depends on the decision of the *majority* which is binding on every individual of the minority. The author explains Locke's ambiguous statements as neither indefensibly individualistic nor idealistic (in Hegel's sense), by pointing out that Locke intended to justify the parliamentary system of government which preserves human rights without losing its working capacity. Moreover, Locke did not perceive the conflict between the individual and society, and probably believed in the harmony of their interests. Even when Locke writes that "the end of law is, not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom" (p. 32)—a statement recalling Rousseau's freedom attained through political organization—he is referring (as Gough remarks) not to "the positive law of any state, but the law of nature" (p. 32). This point seems to the present reviewer decisive in appreciation of Locke's political theory: had he maintained that men attain freedom through *positive* law, i.e. the law of the state, he would identify himself with the authoritarian view of a Rousseau or even the totalitarian conceptions of a Hegel; but, conditioning men's freedom on conformity to *natural* law, a moral and a non-political concept, Locke only shows that he is aware of the fact that men live in society and have to be regulated by moral laws for their own benefit. The doctrine of the law of nature, round which Locke's political philosophy revolves, is but a set of moral rules (see: p. 3, p. 12), and this moral foundation of politics seems to the reviewer quite decisive in evaluation of Locke's theory as opposed to any idealistic-totalitarian system.

Another central point in Locke's political philosophy, which contradicts its interpretation as an authoritarian system, is the doctrine of political trusteeship. ". . . government is 'entrusted with this condition and for this end, that men might have and secure their properties' . . . the legislative power is described as 'only a fiduciary power to act for certain ends'," so that "there remains still in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislative, when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them" (p. 143/4). The state is described as fulfilling a function, as a means for attaining certain ends (namely, the preservation of the rights of men). It is this functionalism that morally limits the legal

sovereignty of the legislative body. It also explains Locke's view on toleration: for he did not advocate toleration on some such general principle as freedom of conscience; he only inferred from his premise that civil government has civil *functions*, that it should not interfere in spiritual matters for which men establish distinct social organizations called churches.*

Locke believed in Man's rationality, and maintained that reason revealed to men the law of nature, i.e. the morally right conduct. To establish a moral code Locke, however, needed the help of the idea of God, whose existence too he believed to be rationally demonstrable. Thus Locke's philosophy seems to us a strange mixture of rational, religious and moral principles, but did not seem so in the seventeenth century. But although it is hardly possible to call Locke a thorough-going rationalist, he may be justly spoken of as a rationalist-in-intention, who ascribed to reason a bigger share in human and social life than any of to-day's rationalists would dare to hope for.

To expect too much from reason is not very rational, however, and Locke could be blamed for many lapses in the logical structure of his argumentation. But this does not prove that he is not an important philosopher; it rather suggests the notion that among philosophies there can exist a commonsense philosophy, whose results may sometimes be sounder than those of some apparently strictly logical systems.

It is, therefore a right approach of Mr. Gough's, when he tries to evaluate Locke's political philosophy in its general meaning, notwithstanding minor (or even major) inconsistencies. What he says in the following passage about Locke's account of the law of nature is a good characteristic of his political philosophy in general: "Taking Locke's account of the law of nature as a whole, it has a general coherence, and is, at least, not repugnant to reasonable common sense" (p. 22).

Mr. Gough shows that Locke's contribution to political philosophy is mostly not his original creation, but rather represents the current thoughts of his age as manifested in the writings of many other men of letters. Still it was Locke's formulation that won fame and influenced political thought and politics by helping the government of England "to develop further on constitutional lines" (p. 72). Such a contribution to human civilization could not be overestimated.

* R. M. MacIver in *Elements of Social Science* propounds the view that social progress is attained by adaptation of separate social organizations to specific functions, a view implied in Locke's political philosophy, although not so emphatically formulated.

Although the present study of Locke's political philosophy is scientific in scope and approach, the author shows on various occasions that the object of his research has also practical implications. Thus, while discussing the problem of the legal sovereignty of parliament, he warns us against the dangers of an arbitrary government of party majorities in parliament. He hopes that they may "discipline themselves to respect, instead of abandoning, the principles of the constitution" (p. 119). Academic research in political philosophy brings us more than often to some present political issues, and that may be one of the major incentives to research, and a decisive ground for interest it may arouse in the reader even if not a professional scholar. M. ROSHWALD

HEREDITARY GENIUS. By Francis Galton. Watts & Co., 10s. 6d.

This is a reprint of the second edition of 1892 of this famous work which first appeared in 1869. At a first glance at it one is struck by the dissimilarity between the conditions of scientific investigation at the time of the writing of this work and now. Galton and his cousin Darwin were private gentlemen with means who simply set themselves to work on private investigations on vast subjects of inquiry. To-day science is subdivided into a number of university departments occupying immense buildings and having staffs of librarians, administrators, cleaners and boilermen, clerks, indexers, secretaries and typists before a single scientist (and there aren't single scientists, they are only to be found in teams to-day) could be got to work. Inevitably such an investigation as that of Galton is affected by the fact that he had to rely on speculation where to-day there would be the means of checking data.

Galton set out to prove that there are aspects of ability that are hereditary, a fact that one might think could be taken for granted. Why should it be thought that genetical laws should not extend to the human being? While it may seem highly unreasonable not to assume that they do so, it is probable that not one man in ten thousand actually does so. Most people do not think about the matter at all and those who do have been brought up in one of the ideologies such as the Christian religion that hold that man is not a part of nature, or in Socialism which holds that all men are equal and that environment accounts for all differences between individuals.

There is another factor which makes for the neglect of the study of the hereditary factor in the human being, the fact that such knowledge cannot be put to practical use. There has been much

study and measurement of different aspects of mental ability, but this is because it can be used for selection in education and in industry; as no one intends to go in for selective breeding in man the science of genetics cannot be applied.

While agreeing with Galton's general thesis most readers to-day will be critical of his too ready references to higher and lower races of people. Apart from those to whom equality is a religion, there seems good reason to suppose that a great amount of the differences in culture and level of culture is due to historical and environmental factors. The forces of evolution work too swiftly to permit vast differences to remain. In the last few generations a number of primitive people have disappeared, or are on the way out, such as the Bushman of South Africa. M.L.B.

Evolution and the Founders of Pragmatism. By Philip P. Wiener. Cumberlege, 32s. 6d.

This is a source book for the tradition of humanism comparable to Halévy's *The Growth of Philosophical Radicalism*. For it shows the re-thinking of the British empirical tradition by intensely lively American minds at Harvard during the sixties and seventies of the last century, under the impact of Darwinian ideas on evolution. What is now known as Pragmatism, the movement developed by William James and John Dewey, is only the main outcome of the currents of thought stirred by the discussions of these highly individualistic thinkers. Their main common concern was to break down the "seminary type" of metaphysics and theology which ruled in American colleges and confined and suppressed the expansion of laboratory-inspired scientific philosophy of the experimental mind as mortally as the old patents and trade restrictions which had stood in the way of the expansion of industry before *laissez faire*. Chauncey Wright, perhaps the most attractive of them all, was an empirical naturalist, standing for the neutrality of science, the independent methods of the several sciences, and for philosophy as a temper and method of thinking, the critical use of ideas, and not a system of dogmas. C. S. Peirce, a subtle logician, was the moving spirit of the group and the originator of "pragmatism" as a method of clarifying ideas by referring them to their practical source and their practical consequences. William James remains the best known of them all and needs no description. Hardly less famous is Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who with Nicholas Green, another lawyer member of the group, followed Bentham in treating law as entirely practical and utilitarian, expressing contem-

porary social pressures and opinions and not abstract metaphysical or ethical ideals. His liberalism and staunch advocacy of freedom of thought informed all his teaching and his judgements and immensely influenced American legal thinking and practice. Perhaps his outlook could not be better summed up than in his own words on the American Constitution: "It is an experiment as all life is an experiment".

Altogether, they brought philosophy down to earth and put it to work on the practical problems of men in the sciences and in society. In so doing, they brought American liberalism to philosophic maturity. They shared a profound aversion from all forms of dogmatism. They opposed revelations and all authoritarian educational and political systems. For them, the greatest happiness of the greatest number was the ethical basis of democracy, and they applied the principle with religious fervour against both rugged individualists and the ruthless collectivism of European social revolutionaries. As for religion, it was for them a personal affair; they were opposed only to religious intolerance, ecclesiastical authoritarianism, and intervention in political or educational institutions. They appreciated (perhaps overestimated) the historical, social, and ethical function of religion.

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive": the liberal temper and creative confidence of brilliant men and friends in that young country before the turn of the century, like other great moments, is not to be repeated. But their hopes were not vain, and to other men the future remains open and the task not less exciting and promising.

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